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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/868,680	08/20/2001	Klaus Pfaffelhuber	MUE-0002	3010

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EXAMINER

SAN MARTIN, EDGARDO

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2837

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	12/22/2006	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/868,680

Applicant(s)

PFAFFELHUBER ET AL.

Examiner

Edgardo San Martin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 36-59 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 36-59 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 37, 38 and 48 are objected to because of the following informalities:
 - Claim 37 is missing the ending period;
 - Claim 38, line 6, after "between 0.01" should read - - and - - instead of "arid";
 - Claim 48, line 1, after the first occurrence of "sound" the period should be deleted.

Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

Regarding claims 38 and 45 – 52, the Examiner have given little patentable weight to the limitation describing the way in which the sound shielding element is intended to be used because it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex Parte Masham*, 2 USPQ F.2d 1647 (1987).

2. Applicant is advised that should claim 38 be found allowable, claims 45 - 52 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing

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one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim.

See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 36 – 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. (EP 0 897 175).

The Examiner have given little patentable weight to the limitation describing the way in which the sound shielding element is intended to be used because it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. Ex Parte Masham, 2 USPQ F.2d 1647 (1987).

With respect to claims 36 - 38 and 45 - 53, Clarke et al. teach a sound-shielding element for covering at least one of sound-reflecting or sound-generating structural parts and method of producing it, comprising at least one panel or layer; a plurality of small perforations formed in the at least one panel or layer; wherein an average diameter or width of the perforations ranges between 0.003 and 0.025 inch and a hole/surface ratio ranges between 3 and 12% so that the sound waves entering the perforations initiate physical effects in a gas volume contained in the perforations and

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wherein the panel has a thickness about 0.015 inch (Figs. 1 and 2; Col.2, Line 49 – Col.3, Line 38); however, fails to specifically disclose wherein an average diameter or width of the perforations ranges between 0.01 and 0.7 mm and a hole/surface ratio ranges between 0.01 and 5%; and wherein the panel has a thickness between 0.05 and 4 mm.

The Examiner considers that it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to provide the sound shielding element with predetermined sized perforations, hole to surface ratio and thickness because these are well known ways to tune an acoustical panel to attenuate sound in a desired range of frequencies; additionally, it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or working ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233, also, it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. In re Boesch, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

With respect to claims 39, 40, 43 and 44, the Examiner considers that Clarke et al. teach the limitations described in the claims (Figs. 1 – 3; Col.3, Lines 3 – 38).

With respect to claims 37, 41, 42, 46 and 54 - 59, the Examiner considers that it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to employ different types of well known manufacturing processes to form the panel because the presence of process limitations, which product does not otherwise patentably distinguish over prior art, cannot impart patentability to the product. In re Stephens 145 USPQ 656 (CCPA 1965). Furthermore, the method of forming the panel is not germane to the issue of

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patentability of the device itself. Therefore, this limitation has been given little patentable weight.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The Examiner considers that the patent to Clark et al. teach the general conditions of the claimed subject matter, and that any person with ordinary skill in the art would be able to tune an acoustic shielding element depending upon the application and the sound desired to be attenuating without departing from the scope of the Clark et al. invention.

Conclusion

5. The attached hereto PTO Form 892 lists prior art made of record that the Examiner considered it pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Contact Information

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Edgardo San Martin whose telephone number is (571) 272-2074. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lincoln Donovan can be reached on (571) 272-2800 ext.37. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edgardo San Martín', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Edgardo San Martín
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2837
Class 181
December 15, 2006